HINTS

ON

ESOTERIC THEOSOPHY.

No. 2.

Swedenborg and Theosophy.

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THE publication of the correspondence between Messrs. G. Y. and H. X., in the first number of this series, has led to the receipt by the latter gentleman of a great number of letters. One of these (the writer of which is a Swedenborgian,) was sufficiently able and typical to deserve a full reply; and, as that reply is likely to prove interesting and instructive to many, we have decided (with the writer's permission) to publish it, along with the letter that elicited it.

Of course it is to be understood that the writings of Mr. H. X. and other "*lay disciples*" are in no sense authoritative. They contain much that is true, much that cannot fail to furnish matter for reflection to thoughtful minds. Were this not so we should not publish them; but at the same time they are the work of learners, only comparatively recently admitted to tuition, and they are necessarily, therefore, more or less imperfect, if not actually, in some passages, incorrect.

August, 1882.

HINTS ON ESOTERIC THEOSOPHY.

No. 2.

Swedenborg and Theosophy.

No. 1.—(Letter from H.—R.—Z.—a well-known Swedenborgian, to H—X—, F. T. S.)

DEAR H——,

HAVING duly read your letter to G. Y., I do not regard you as raving or delirious (as I expect ——is inclined to do), because Swedenborg's philosophy has given me, as I believe, a key to all this sort of thing, and prepared me to expect and understand, satisfactorily to myself, manifestations and developments of very various natures. Writing 70 or 80 years before 1848, he explained that in former times, on account of the great prevalence of magical and diabolical perversions of spiritual truth and spiritual communications, these had been forbidden, and with the loss of such knowledge communication between the two worlds had been closed. With a new step in human progress, or, as he expressed it, a New Dispensation, communication with the spirit world (always preserved in glimpses by special individuals throughout the darkest ages) was then re-opened; because, though not without its dangers—every good gift is always in danger of misapplication and perversion—there was now again spiritual truth and spiritual life enough in the world to ensure more of good than of evil results. I do not mean that these are Swedenborg's *words*—merely the ideas conveyed in various parts of his works.

I have, therefore, never been surprised at, or staggered by, the spiritistic phenomena of which, through friends and books, I have for many years heard and known a great deal; and, though the conclusion may, I fear, be unpalatable to you, I have no doubt whatever that this Theosophy is just such a phase of spiritism as might be expected to take root in the *Eastern* mental sphere, high and subtle, as the outcome of the ancient races of the high spiritual plane which have left their testimony in the ancient eastern writings, Vedas and so on, of which I have seen extracts and accounts sufficient to confirm their descent from that wisdom of the ancients which has been lost in the moral and sensual decadence of mankind.

There is nothing in this last pamphlet of yours (HINTS NO. 1,) which is not quite consonant with spiritistic manifestations well known in this country and America. Luminous forms, clad in white robes, floating on the tree-tops and appearing and vanishing through walls, are only a further development of the delicate luminous spirit hands or faces, or, I believe, even forms, which have been so much talked of, and which some of my friends have seen so far as the *hands* went, and the spirits promised a head and shoulders soon (!) only the seances were broken up first.

The letters, &c., I believe to be all consistent with spirit power over those open to their influence. The "Brothers" may be living men—at least there may be *men* calling themselves Brothers; but if so I have no doubt they are high mediums under spirit influence. I think it more probable that the Brothers are *spirits* influencing the adepts, but either is quite comprehensible. This view does not necessitate the alternative that Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott are impostors, but simply that, lacking, as they so obviously do, the spiritual truths which interpret all their chaos of principles (fifth, sixth, and seventh

principles !), they misunderstand the influences which they suffer to sway them. Madame Blavatsky's account of her experiences in childhood simply shows that, being naturally one of the imaginative peculiarly constituted persons who become mediums, she was deceived by the spirits who communicated with and wrote through her. To talk of her fifth spirit* writing through her is to make a chaos of the human soul. She might as well be possessed by a devil as by such a fifth spirit (and better too as there would be more of hope of its being cast out).

There is no need of impugning the entire truthfulness of the writers of any of the certificates, but I would submit that, seeing forms in Bombay, or elsewhere, whether in rooms, verandahs or tree-tops, is no proof or evidence whatever of the existence of Brothers in the recesses of the Himalayas. It simply proves, assuming absolute correctness as well as truthfulness, that the parties saw what they say they saw. The interpretations are purely hypothetical. The astral bells are no more incomprehensible on spiritistic principles than the playing on musical instruments by viewless hands, though it may indicate spiritism of a higher and subtler nature; but that would follow naturally in the eastern spirit spheres as I should expect them to manifest themselves.

I may say that *none* of the manifestations transcend, if indeed they equal some of which I have known here. I knew—at least I have seen and been introduced to—an unfortunate young lady, related to, and intimately known by, intimate friends of mine, who published books on the spirit communications she enjoyed, in the second of which she declared herself to be nightly visited by a spirit bridegroom, asserting in words I could hardly have conceived a woman penning—let alone publishing—that she felt the

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* *Principle* please, not spirit !—H. X.

contact of his "warm, living flesh," and announcing that at a given time she would become a mother in consequence, and she actually made the baby clothes. When the child did not come she explained that she had been mistaken in expecting an earthly child– it was a spirit child that was meant. Happily she died soon afterwards. Now it would be impossible, under the circumstances, to doubt the absolute *truthfulness*, so far as she was concerned, of that hapless writer. Short of the most profound conviction, no living woman could have so committed herself; and yet she was not, in the ordinary sense, insane; but she was, I have no doubt, under the influence of deluding spirits, to whose deceits, vanity and a species of spiritual ambition gone astray, which those who knew her closely have described to me in her, had laid her open. After this nothing in your book strikes me as even extraordinary for spiritism.

I have read Sinnett's book, and it contained to me most palpable internal evidence of imposture—not on his part, but as regards the assumed authorship of the letters that he reproduces. If ever those letters were written by a Brahminical or Eastern Recluse in the Himalayas who had not been in Europe for, I forget, how many years, then Johnson or Fielding might have written the Vedas. Written by spirit dictation through Olcott or Madame Blavatsky they are perfectly intelligible.

I will read "The Perfect Way," and if I can get them the "Elixir of Life*" in the two Theosophists you mention; but they would not, I feel sure, at all alter my view. If Theosophy be of any use or comfort to you, I should be sorry to deprive you—I would not try to deprive you—of your satisfaction in it, but I am bound to tell you honestly the points in which, to my mind, it fatally fails.

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* Reprinted at page 54.

First, it offers me nothing new. Universal Brotherhood is a fine idea, but it is not Theosophic. "One is your master, even Christ (meaning Divine Truth as revealed to each individual soul), and all ye are brethren." If Christianity has not brought about Universal Brotherhood, as yet, it is because Christianity has not only never been universally lived, but has hardly ever been lived at all, except in isolated instances, and even then mostly in fragments, and few people even know what Christianity and the gospel mean, so grievously have both been distorted and outraged by the creeds of the so-called Christian Churches. Everyone who lives* a true Christian life knows and realizes Universal Brotherhood without the aid of Theosophy.

Secondly—and this is *the* fatal point—Brotherhood presupposes *Fatherhood*, and it appears to me that Theosophy not merely ignores but *proscribes* "our Father which is in Heaven," who is the life of every human soul, and who is for ever at hand hearing and answering our prayers—who numbers the very hairs of our heads—whose providence is for ever guiding and watching over us, "leading us by a path which we knew not, providing every breath that we draw and the power of drawing it"—whose tender mercies are over all his works in this world even, and who in the next will "wipe all tears from all faces, and grant every heart's desire." And in exchange for Him what does Theosophy offer? Why a Brotherhood up in the Himalayas, who somewhat grudgingly consent to impart some of their wisdom—one of whom highly *purified* is "grim and hard as Calvin" (what must he have been when unpurified?), and who warn you that you may spend your whole life in obedience to their behests and make very little progress after all!

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* None of us can do so perfectly, but the more we progress in it the more we can realize of true Brotherhood.—H.—R.—Z.—

I believe in *no Brotherhood*, (but a brotherhood of evil and darkness), which disowns and ignores the One Great Father of Love, Light and Life. The evil character of this Brotherhood, whether in the flesh or out of the flesh, is stamped for me on p. 30 of your book, where they are reported as saying (or intimating)—" nay of the great secret we will teach you *nothing* until by your own free-will you have placed your minds *under our control*, &c." The love of domination, that most fatal of human lusts, is here nakedly displayed. The Popish Church claimed and claims precisely the same power over human souls. Of course both allege a good reason, but there *can* be no good reason for things *per se* evil, and to attempt to *dominate* other free human souls is, as I hold, in itself a sin and the sure test by which evil spirits (or what you call astrals) may be detected. *Good* ones may *seek* to enlighten or convince, but to say, " blindfold yourself and follow *us*"—that injunction never came or can come from celestial spheres.

In a word, it appears to me that you are setting up these " Brothers" as your *masters* in God's place, and I can only regard it as one form of idolatry. So the Roman Catholics worshipped their saints and popes—so the still more benighted heathen worshipped their images. But if you cannot lift up your mind to worship and believe in the One true God—if you do not recognize His voice in the revelations of the Gospel or find answers and solutions to the difficulties of life—try the simple process which helped me, of asking and having, seeking and finding, knocking and its being opened unto you; it may be that the instinct of worship and aspiration in you is finding food in these other ways, keeping it, as it were, from utter starvation till better times.

One fundamental error underlies all this occultism, which is no new thing in the world; it is the idea that spiritual mysteries may be penetrated by *natural*

means—(that the means of prolonging earthly life might be obtained by cunning distillations and combinations of natural substances is one phase of this error). But this is no more possible than to find the soul by the subtlest dissection of the body or analysis of its substances.

There are many other things—straws showing which way the wind blows—to which I might refer as plainly indicating to my mind that these Theosophic teachings are unsound. (The representing conjugal intercourse as an infringement of chastity is one of these; no law of our being, pervading the whole living universe, can in its orderly manifestations clash with purity or with the very highest celestial states). But it would only be going into needless particulars when the whole system tends in the one false direction, allegorically described in the Old Testament as eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to become as Gods (in one's own eyes,) like these Brothers who profess to possess the great secret, but, short of the most abject subjection to their will, decline to impart it. It is the old, old story; instead of looking up to the One Great Creator willing to *receive* from Him the light and truth he is ever willing to bestow, men have ever sought to exclude Him (by ignoring Him) from His own world, and then try, vainly ever, to force themselves into His counsels or mysteries by climbing up some other way.

He that doeth the Will of my Father that is in Heaven he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Moreover we are told that the comforter or spirit of truth who comes when man has risen from the death of selfishness and mere earthliness to the life of obedience to his living God, "will lead us into *all* truth." Surely it is better to live the life of the Christian Gospel, doing unto others as we would they should do unto us, seeking first

the Kingdom of God by obedience to His Gospel precepts, under promise that by such life we shall be led unto *all truth* (by degrees of course as we need and desire it), and have *all things needful* added unto us, than to set about leading a semi-ascetic life, which does not appear to be connected with much of service to others so far as its exemplars, the Brothers, are concerned, with no distinct aim in view; but in your case, you say a certainty that you can never make much progress in it, at least in this world! In the Christian life every one may make progress who will, and will progress in proportion to sincere desire and effort. However my faith in the One All-loving Father firmly assures me that His Providence is over you *whether you know it or not*, and will lead you one day to the true Brotherhood in which all are brethren, because they are *first* His children, and in which it is the highest happiness of each to impart to others whatever of special light or wisdom he may possess, without pledge of secrecy or of that implicit obedience, which no mature rational human being should yield to any but his Maker and Father.

Some people I know try to belittle Christianity by pointing out that similar truths and virtues were inculcated by older teachers. Of course the Divine Truth has always been above us, trying to shine down into human souls through all possible rifts in the fogs and clouds of self-love and self-sufficient pride which rise from and settle upon them. One great beauty to me of spiritual Christianity, such as Swedenborg's teachings have helped me to, is that instead of setting down other religions as false, it recognizes the truth in all of them, and Theosophy among them may have its uses for others, though to me, in comparison to Christianity, it may seem as utterly innutritive and indigestible as saw-dust compared to bread. One man's meat is another man's poison mentally as well as physically.

No. 2.—(Reply to the foregoing letter).

DEAR——

THERE is so much in your letter in which I agree, and our beliefs and ideas in reality approximate so closely (though differing widely in your eyes in consequence of *your* misconception of *my* views and position) that, despite what you say, I am tempted to reply somewhat in detail to your interesting letter.

It is neither our principle nor our practice to argue *much* with those who differ from us. We *know* that we possess a close approximation to the truth (the closest to which man in this stage of his career can attain), and we would fain share it with others; but we do not suppose that anyone's "salvation," (as you would call it), anyone's happiness, here or hereafter, depends upon acquiring an intellectual grasp of all truth. On the contrary, to follow your own symbology, we know full well that, often importuned, the unjust judge will at length arise and do justice; and that the forlorn or widowed soul, earnestly clinging to even the most erroneous doctrine, will, in the end, win her cause. So, although anxious to give to all who *can* accept it our precious knowledge, we have no misgivings as to the future of those who disagree with us, and feel in no way that imperative yearning for proselytising, natural and right in those who conceive a hell, yawning to involve in everlasting torments all, whose faith differs from their own.

But you really are so very close to us that it seems worth while to try and clear up some of your misconceptions. True, things look to you very different to what we tell you that they are, and yet, much as it may impede your vision and distort to you the objects beyond, there is in reality only a thin veil between us.

Before, however, entering into details please realize our position. You hold—and rightly so—that you are far more near the truth than the majority of the so-called Christian Churches, because through the revelations of the seer Swedenborg you have grasped a portion of the spiritual sense of religion.

Agreed—Swedenborg was a great seer, one of the greatest natural mystics that arose as witnesses to the truth during that dark cycle of materialism now drawing to a close. But he was only a natural and untrained seer, and there is the same difference between such a seer and a scientifically trained one, as there is between the natural musician, who plays and sings entirely by ear, and does not know a note of music, and another who, to the same natural capacities, superadds a thorough knowledge of Throughbase, and a complete scientific musical education.

The untrained seer is always liable to err, and is the slave, not the master, of the spiritual experiences he encounters.

So it was with Swedenborg, and hence amongst much that is not only sublime but absolutely true, he has intermingled much that is erroneous.

There are those amongst the Adepts who knew him well. Efforts were made to help him to clear his mind, and not altogether unsuccessfully; much of the truth he did bring back from other planes (to use your own phraseology) he owed to that assistance. No mystic with anything like Swedenborg's natural capacities ever dawns upon the world without persistent efforts being made by one or other of the Adepts to lead them to the absolute truth.* But in his case (as in that of so many others) this was impossible owing to an ineradicable

* That is absolute quoad all intelligences conditioned in the universe.

erroneous fundamental conception, which absolutely barred his ever rising to the perfect light, and always insensibly blurred and distorted this to his inner sight.

This erroneous conception was the Western notion of an *omnipotent* PERSONAL God, of which more hereafter.

Not only, however, was Swedenborg as an untrained seer liable to err, but he stood alone, having no brother mystics working with him, by whose spiritual experiences he could check his own.

That he penetrated into extra mundane planes is undoubted, but he brought away erroneous and imperfect conceptions on many points, partly due to mistakes of observation and apprehension and other causes, but chiefly owing to the interference of astral influences with his cognitions on his mental return to this plane, and during his attempt to remember and record what he had learnt.

On the other hand we claim that the adepts* and their predecessors for thousands of years have been trained mystics, possessing the power of penetrating at will into the higher planes, not with the uncertain steps of the natural mystic, but with the certainty of the skilled adept, who knows precisely what he is doing, where he is going, and the scientific reasons of all he does, feels and wills. We claim further that all the knowledge thus acquired has been recorded from generation to generation—one account corroborating another, one supplying the omissions in another, so that a positive science of the invisible universe has been created, based on as wide an experience as any physical science, and

* There are adepts of more schools than one ; and these schools doubtless differ on some of the highest transcendental mysteries and as to minor points of discipline and organization ; but the methods and the great mass of the doctrines of all schools, deserving of the name, are identical.

infinitely more reliable in its consistent totality than could possibly be the gleanings of any solitary seer or prophet, however great and worthy.

This is our position. You may of course accept or reject it, but *you* can hardly maintain that it is either incomprehensible or in any way inherently unreasonable. Materialists, who consider you and me equally fanatics for believing in a world of spirit, and (which is still more insane in their eyes) for holding that this latter is the real and permanent world, while the physical every-day world is unreal and transitory, may, and of course will, logically assert that the entire concept is a chimera, a delusion, or a fraud. But *you* (unless you conceive yourself to have already mastered *all* the mysteries of the universe) cannot *consistently* deny that our contention may *possibly* be true; all you can assert is, that as yet you have seen no sufficient reasons for accepting it as such, and that there are points involved in it which (owing to your imperfect knowledge of them) lead you to disbelieve that it can be so.

Let me now return to the text of your letter You say: "I have no doubt whatever that this Theosophy is just such a phase of spiritism as might be expected to take root in the Eastern mental sphere, high and subtle as the outcome of the ancient races of the high and spiritual plane."

Now a good deal depends upon the meaning you attach to "*spiritism.*" By this word *I* understand that science, which embraces a knowledge of spirit and things spiritual, and in this sense Theosophy is not merely a phase but the very soul of *spiritism.* But if by spiritism you merely mean what is *commonly*, despite Allan Kardec's definitions, called Spiritualism, the root and basis of which is the communication by and through mediums, with unknown spiritual entities, then this is fundamentally distinct from, and to a great extent proscribed by, Theosophy.

Understand clearly what Theosophy is—consider it alike in its practical, mundane, exoteric aspect, and in its spiritual, celestial, esoteric aspect.

In its exoteric aspect, its cardinal tenets are—an unselfish love for all God's creatures, for our fellow men in especial, and the entire devotion of the mind and soul to their highest conceptions of wisdom, goodness and love. Hence Theosophy lays the greatest stress upon the practical realization of Universal Brotherhood, and struggles to level all those pernicious barriers of caste, creed, and race that in this country, perhaps above all others, have proved such copious sources of human suffering. Hence Theosophy insists on the most absolute purity of deed, word and thought, and on a constant endeavour to approximate to the perfections of that glorious ideal which you call God. We do not, it is true, use this latter term; firstly, because it has been desecrated, and is repugnant to us, by reason of the grossly material atmosphere, of, as they seem to us, unworthy, degrading, and anthropomorphic (if not actually blasphemous) conceptions that surrounds it; but, secondly, because finite and impure, as after every effort we must still remain, we are conscious of the necessary inadequacy of even our loftiest conceptions of the infinite first Cause, and prefer to refer to *our* highest conceptions of wisdom, love, and goodness, as such, without attaching to these a name, involving the assumption that we are competent to realize the Infinite and the Absolute.

But for all this the fundamental teachings of exoteric Theosophy are essentially the same as those on which, said "the Master," hang all the Law and the Prophets: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself." And indeed these have been the cardinal tenets of all religions, worthy of the name, since the world began, and this is the universal platform on which we ask all men to meet in

brotherhood, without reference to their peculiar form of faith or creed, and, despite all other differences, to become one, in the light of universal charity and love.

In its esoteric aspect the essence of true Theosophy is the development of the supersensuous faculties, or, in other words, Soul Culture or Psychism. The result of this culture is so to enfranchise man's spiritual essence as to enable it to effect, from time to time, even during this life, an union with the universal spirit, and retain, on relapsing into the normal plane of earthly life, a correct remembrance of what has been learnt during such union.

It is only then in its esoteric aspect that it can, for a moment, be considered to resemble spiritualism, and that supposed resemblance can only exist for those to whom the true nature of *both* systems is unknown. In spiritualism, communications are carried on with unknown incorporeal entities, who are entirely independent of the medium's control whom, on the contrary, they control, these entities being for the most part (there are exceptions) of a low moral type. In Soul Culture, or esoteric Theosophy, communication is effected with the universal Spirit, the embodiment of all truth, moral and intellectual, and if other entities are dealt with, they are dealt with as servants and not as masters, with the fullest knowledge of their nature and identity.

Swedenborg, by natural gifts, was able to ascend in spirit to higher planes, but, unskilled and untrained was always liable to have his recollections of what he saw and was taught in the higher spiritual regions, clouded and distorted by the influences of the intermediate planes through which his spirit had to pass on his return to this life. But the adept, who by a protracted course of Psychism, attains the same faculty of visiting the celestial plane (I use *your* phraseology—mere words signify nothing one way

or the other) being as it were a skilled and scientific, and not a mere rule-of-thumb operator, is master of the intermediate plane, and is not liable to its baneful and misleading influences.

It is from this intermediate plane that all the seance room spirits come,* and as their influence can scarcely, with very rare exceptions, be other than morally lowering, Theosophy steadily discountenances any habitual intercourse with them.

I think you must see now that Theosophy is really even more distinct from "Spiritism," as you understand it, than Swedenborgianism. This latter indeed lies between the two. Swedenborg was in some aspects a natural adept, but in others only a high medium, and it is to this latter fact that are due the many serious errors which are combined with those grand truths, that he was the first, in modern times, to re-enunciate in Europe.

Talking of the Vedas, &c., you say you "have seen extracts sufficient to confirm their descent from that wisdom of the ancients which has been lost in the moral and sensual decadence of mankind." But that wisdom, though buried from the world's eye, has *never* been lost; it is just that wisdom, that the various schools of adepts, for thousands and thousands of years, have handed down in secrecy and in silence from teacher to pupil. It is precisely to acquire this wisdom that we press on towards the inner circle, striving to become worthy of admission, and it is precisely of this ancient wisdom that its venerable custodians now know that the time has come for affording to the outside world, sinking, sadly, in a slough of materialism, some transient glimpses.

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* Of course instead of spirits *coming*, the medium's own spirit may be *drawn away* to higher planes—that is a different thing; but what ever *comes* to the seance room must be of the lower order of spirits.

Again you say "the Brothers" may be living men, at least there may be *men* calling themselves Brothers; but, if so, I have no doubt that they are high mediums under Spirit influence."

Here, again, it is a matter of phraseology. In one sense all adepts are high mediums under Spirit influence, but not in any sense in which these words are used at the present day. Buddha, Jesus, (and Swedenborg when unmolested by the influences of the lower planes) were high mediums under Spirit influence—they were mediums for the revelation of spiritual truth, under the influence of the Universal Spirit; and so, in a major or minor degree, are all the Brothers and other true adepts.

In or associated with every mature human being* is an emanation from the Absolute, a ray of the divine sun, a scintilla of the universal intelligence. Exceptional men in all ages have not only possessed a distinct consciousness of this their heavenly guardian and guide but have been, at times, enabled to unite it temporarily, with its source, and so, for the time being, live, as it were, in the region of omniscience. These have been the prophets and seers of the world—always more or less liable to err, from the extraordinary difficulty of reproducing correctly, and in their entirety, after a return to normal conditions, the true impressions received during, what Plato and others called, the time of ecstasy.

For thousands on thousands of years, adept after adept has investigated and re-investigated the mysteries of the unseen world, has effected for long periods the junction of his own spirit with the Universal Spirit, and has recorded his experiences. Thus by the constant checking of the work of each one by that of all others, a definite science of things spiritual has been evolved, on which other adepts

* Excepting lunatics, idiots, and some degraded persons who have as it were, driven away the spirit.

again have worked and have obtained the results which were foreseen as infallible if the science was correct.

Thus there has been the careful observation and record of facts; the generalization of the accumulated materials into a science and the verification of this by experiment.

In the face of this it is rather amusing to find you, who rely upon the dicta of one single untrained Mystic, calmly saying that the Brothers of the Tibetan school, (for though you say Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, it was these brothers who taught us the constitution of man) "*lacking as they so obviously do the spiritual truths* which interpret all their chaos of principles (fifth, sixth, and seventh principles!!) misunderstand the influences which they suffer to sway them." My dear friend, there has been, and there is only one single scientific method of metaphysics and of investigating spiritual things, and of that method, in the present materialistic age, the adepts alone possess the key.

Herbert Spencer, Lewis, and fifty other philosophers have denied the possibility of any such science, and, acquainted as they were with the physical senses only, they were quite correct from their standpoint, for by the physical senses or intellect alone, no man can ever acquire a *knowledge* of things spiritual.

But as a fact there are senses independent of the physical organization; the soul has faculties as well as the body; the essence of Esoteric Theosophy is the cultivation of these senses; and the results obtained in the course of long ages by the persistent use of these senses, after these have been laboriously trained, constitute a complete and reliable science of things spiritual.

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[illegible] the whole world has been leavened.

The adepts are [illegible] unlike any mediums I ever heard of. To-day one traveling in India meets you in the flesh; a few months later, when he is in Germany, Kashmir or Tibet, he suddenly appears beside you in a closed room, in his astral form, and gives you instructions, or he drops a letter on your table and your reply, as soon as

written and ready, disappears and duly reaches him, and that, mind, when there is no other person in the house knowing any thing of the matter, and when poor Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, those *bêtes noirs* of the incredulous, are both a thousand miles or more away from where you are, and have perhaps never even heard of the particular adept dealing with you.

This power of entirely separating the more spiritual portion of our nature from our grosser physical body—of separating, in fact, *ourselves* from the earthly garment in which we here normally appear, and of traversing the world at will and with the rapidity of thought, unencumbered with our corporeal frame—is one, to the acquisition of which, Soul Culture is specially directed.

When you reflect upon the alarming growth during the past fifty years of materialism; when you notice how all existing religious systems seem perishing by a sort of internal decay—a spiritual dry rot—losing day by day all vital hold upon an ever-increasing proportion of their nominal adherents ; and when, as a result of this, you observe that already a majority of the most cultivated and intellectual men of the time (men whose views will infallibly mould those of the next generation) either distinctly disbelieve, or gravely doubt, a continued existence after the death of the body—when, I say, you reflect on all this, and all this involves, you can scarcely fail to realize the importence of Esoteric Theosophy, or misconceive the motives which, after thousands of years of secrecy, have now determined the adepts to share some portion of their knowledge with mankind.

So long as the age of faith lasted, so long as mankind were able to *believe* in a future life, on hearsay and without proof, it was sufficient for the adepts to keep alive, against the time at which it would be

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[illegible] become a world of devils.
[illegible] result of the obliteration

of vital religious faith; and this obliteration spreads apace as the rising tide of materialism swells over the sands on which the footprints of bygone faiths have already grown sadly faint.

Where shall we look for help? These bygone faiths are dead, because the age of faith has passed away; as with the flora of the coal measures, the atmosphere in which their existence was possible has disappeared! Men will no longer believe on hearsay, and these old faiths have nought but this to proffer to the unspiritual minded. If these are to be acted upon, if the coming terrors of a godless, soulless, materialistic age are to be averted, we must give *proof* of an existence beyond the grave—of something in man independent of his physical and death-doomed body; we must show experimentally that this something can exist apart from that body even while that yet lives; and that that something is the man himself, the "I," whose only connection with the fleshly body is the same as this latter's with a suit of clothes. Nay more, we must rehabilitate the divine law of retributive justice—a justice that none can elude, none deceive—a justice that exactly requites every human being for every deed, good or bad. Lastly, we must promulgate once more and strive to nurse into a practical fact, (which it has never yet been anywhere or at any time) the old divine idea of Universal Brotherhood. Where are we to look for all this save only to Theosophy? Theosophy that in its exoteric section preaches and insists on the practice of this brotherhood, and that in its esoteric section teaches all, willing and worthy to learn, how to obtain for *themselves*, in their own persons, (besides having experience of it in the case of others) proof positive of their distinctness from, and capacity for, existence apart from their physical bodies, and of an unsleeping power that inevitably requites to the last iota every good and evil act.

So long as *faith*, *i.e.* the capacity for sincerely believing on intangible evidence, survives, and for

all in whom it does so survive, (and despite the growing materialism there are millions on millions in whom it does still survive) Theosophy signifies less, but already faith has disappeared for a majority of mankind, and she herself, long persecuted by a purblind physical science, has already gathered her robes around her, and stands waving her bright pinions, resting by but a single foot upon the darkening earth, and about to spring up and pass away to those celestial planes, that she has so long, and of late so vainly, proclaimed to mortals.

What then is to become of mankind? What then will avail any of the existing exoteric creeds? Not one of them has any substantial *proof* to offer of its most fundamental doctrines. True, in the main, they mostly are, but their priests have long ages back lost the keys of the sanctuary, the vouchers for their dogmas; and a generation that has no faith, and *must* have clear *proof* of everything, will sweep their doctrines and themselves away with equal contempt.

Esoteric Theosophy (using the word in its broadest sense) alone retains the power of furnishing that tangible proof, that experimental demonstration of the root doctrines of all true religions, and Esoteric Theosophy must, therefore, become the religion of the future, either in its own name or under that of one or more of the existing religions that, incorporating it with themselves, gain a new lease of life and burst out from the dead chrysalis shell of their old errors into a brighter and higher career.

It was not in vain that your great seer Swedenborg advised men to search for the LOST WORD amongst the hierophants of Tartary and Tibet; it is amongst these and allied schools that had a common root with them that, for ages, it has lain concealed, and Theosophy is the doorway that these hierophants and adepts are now opening to all who, in singleness and purity of heart, yearn for that precious and all-powerful doctrine, that long LOST WORD.

To me the position is so clear, and so pregnant with the most momentous issues, that I cannot understand the world's comparative indifference.

All religion, all human societies, are based upon two ideas—a life beyond the grave and the exact requital there of all good and evil done here.

Eradicate a belief in these ideas, and all religions collapse, all society crumbles away.* Custom no doubt is a great power, and the disintegration of society is not the work of a single generation, and moreover a limited proportion of the human race, in whom culture supplies, to a certain extent, the place of conscience, may yet live blameless and even beautiful lives; but for the great mass of mankind, the sanction afforded by these two ideas is the

* I do not of course ignore the fact that many able writers, judging only from the Old Testament, as popularly understood, have maintained that the Jews entirely ignored the doctrine of a future state, and have cited them as a prominent example of a community flourishing for ages, without the social support of this doctrine. But this is a total misconception; the doctrine of a future state was not, it is true, openly preached to the masses, who were on the contrary rather taught that God was ever present with them ready to punish and reward all evil and all good, immediately and in *this* life; and undoubtedly, for an ignorant and backward people, this is the most admirable creed so long as their priests, rulers and leaders possess the requisite occult knowledge and power to afford reasonable grounds for believing in it. And this is what Moses (learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians) and the priesthood following him, for long, did possess. But as every enlightened student of the Kabala knows, all the higher priests, all the leaders of the Jews, kings and priests, almost without exception, had the firmest possible hold on the doctrine of a future life, and held almost in their integrity the esoteric doctrines of all living adepts from whose spiritual ancestors (if I may coin the phrase to signify those ancient Fathers of occultism whose mantles modern adepts bear) alike the sceret knowledge of the Chaldeans and the Egyptians, the two sources of the Kabala, were derived. It is an absolute mistake therefore to cite the Hebrews as an instance of a successful civilized community maintaining themselves for long independently of the doctrine of a future state, for from first to last their leaders and rulers, those who alike guided the national life, created and maintained the moulds in which it was cast, and designed and worked the dies in which it was coined, were intensely impressed with this very doctrine which was the corner stone of their inner faith.—H. X.

effective, though concealed, restraint that renders orderly social organization, permanently possible.

The leaders of human thought are for the most part repudiating these ideas as incapable of proof. This repudiation is rapidly spreading (the most loathsome and contagious of all diseases), and it is spreading, not merely as a negation of the susceptibility of these ideas of proof, but as an affirmation that they are false.

Already the demoralizing effects are becoming manifest in most countries and in most ranks of society. Nothing but the experimental demonstration of the truth of these ideas can now apparently arrest the coming, though slowly creeping, social chaos. It is not necessary to prove these ideas to the masses ; it is only necessary to prove them to those whose intellectual energies, virtually though insensibly, rule the minds of the multitude. But, even so, no one religion, however firmly convinced its still faithful adherents may be of their truth, has any tangible proof whatsoever to offer of these fundamental and all-important ideas. Theosophy alone possesses, and now offers to all who will fit themselves to receive it, absolute proof of both these ideas ; and yet not only the thoughtless multitude but thoughtful religious people like yourself, either affect to disregard it altogether, or without any enquiry calmly set it down as spiritualism !

But I must return to your letter. I am sorry the 5th, 6th, and 7th principles so excite your scorn, but as they are a fact, I hardly see how I can appease you. Joking apart, it is simply your own misconceptions in this, and most other cases, that are leading you astray.

I presume you do not doubt that your mind and your soul are two different things ; and that the mind may be destroyed, as by a bodily injury, without any detriment to the soul.

Well; the 5th principle is the mind; or, rather, what you call mind, memory, intellect, are *powers* of the 5th principle.

This boasted intellect is, after all, not such a very exalted possession; it is chiefly designed for recording, classifying, and reasoning from the phenomena cognized by the external or physical senses. Broadly speaking, and, as a whole, it will be of no use in a state in which all the soul senses being thoroughly awakened, all things, not merely phenomena or external appearances, but also *noumena* or internal realities, are known by intuition.

It is no more a permanent property than a handsome body or a good voice, and like these it will be (excepting only its most ethereal portions) left behind as an useless encumbrance on the upward passage.

True that in this earth-life the sense of individuality chiefly resides, as a rule, in this 5th principle, and the 4th, which is the will; but if what you call salvation is to be attained, or, as we should say, continuous survival is to be secured, this sense of individuality must be transferred to the 6th principle, or this latter, as it were, evolved by the junction of the 5th with the 7th principle. Now this 6th principle is approximately what you call the soul, dormant in the mass of mankind, and only awakened when the mind realizes that emanation of the Absolute, that portion of the divine Essence, that ray of the celestial sun, which hangs a halo round the sleeping soul, and which has been, at all times, dimly conceived under various titles, such as guardian angel, tutelary genius, and the like. This is what we call the 7th principle, and until the 5th effects a junction with this, in other words until the mind realizes and bows down before this divine messenger and message, the 6th principle, the soul, remains dormant. Where is the chaos here? As a fact all is orderly and

scientific: it is your own conception of body, mind, and soul that is an unintelligible muddle, explaining none of the conditions of life, and irreconcilable with well-established facts.

There is the 1st principle, the gross physical body, which, after death, usually putrefies and rots; the 2nd principle, the ethereal body; the 3rd principle, the life, force, or essence, vital ray, or whatever you like to call it; the 4th principle, the will force; the 5th the mind; the 6th, the soul; and 7th, the spirit.

Now all these are clearly distinct, have different origins, play different parts, and progress to different destinations.

Don't you see that this 7th principle is what you call God, or more strictly the "*Word*" the *logos*? That it was to this that Jesus referred when he said that the kingdom of Heaven was within us, and again when he promised that he would be with all, who truly follow the path he trod, to the end of the world. This 7th principle it is, from which you derive strength when you pray to resist temptations, resulting from tendencies of the body, and of *certain* of the will and mind powers acted upon by these; it is this 7th principle, the "God with us," that you speak of as hearing and answering prayer!

You have altogether failed to grasp the situation. You say "Universal Brotherhood is a fine idea, but it is not Theosophy." One is your master even Christ (meaning Divine Truth as revealed to each individual soul) and all ye are brethren." How absolutely true! This divine truth revealed to each *awakened* soul (for mind in millions on millions the soul seems to remain dormant) is the 7th principle; it is Christ; it is God, or what you like, but it is impersonal, and a scintilla only of the Universal Divine, which is *in* and *is* every thing. And truly are we *all*—aye every thing that exists—brothers,

in that we all have this one common parent. Christianity, true spiritual Christianity, cannot differ from Theosophy, for Theosophy is the root of which Christianity is but one shoot, and the Redeemer himself was an initiate, and an adept.

You add that if Christianity has not brought about a conviction of our Universal Brotherhood this has been due to the fact that so few have lived the Christian life, and that true Christianity has remained practically unknown having been smothered under a mass of misconceptions evolved by the so-called Christian Churches. In all this I entirely agree ; and the object of Theosophy is to bring men back to the basal and eternal truths from which Christ and Buddha alike drew their inspiration.

Yes ! assuredly, as you say, every one who lives a *true* Christian life does understand Universal Brotherhood ; but he also lives a *true* Theosophical life and acts in accordance with the doctrines, which helped to make Christ what he was, and which were enunciated by Theosophy thousands of years before Christ was born. For remember, what I have so often stated, Theosophy is the root religion of the world, which has for thousands and thousands of years been handed down from adept to adept, and which has been continually preached to the world, more or less openly (as the world was able to bear it,) by one great religious reformer after another. Many of these were initiates and adepts, and had a complete knowledge of the truth, though forced by the existing conditions of society to preach this only in part, in parables, or by symbols. But numbers of the less emiment like Swedenborg, or again like the authoress of the Perfect Way, owing to natural spiritual gifts, have unguided penetrated into the unseen world, and have learned for themselves (but necessarily imperfectly) what they preached.

The *name* is *not* much older perhaps than the commencement of our era, but the doctrines, the spiritual

truths, are as old as the rational responsible mankind (there was remember an earlier non-responsible mankind), and the only reason for adopting this comparatively recent name was that it fairly represented the essence of what was to be taught, and that the early Theosophists were initiates of schools that had branched off from the primal Asiatic Brotherhood, and did, though in an enigmatical manner, set forth many of the doctrines now held by adepts of all schools.

Turn where you will, to the writings of Confucius, Plato, the Zenda Vesta, the Kabala, the Vedants, the secret Buddhistic literature, the vision of Ezekiel, the Apocalypse—there is the same doctrine hidden in all, and that doctrine is the basis of Theosophy.

Theosophy has always had two sides, if I may so express myself—the practical and the theoretical. On the one has been set forth at all times, and to all men, openly and without reserve, that life which it is desirable to live, if one would prosper after this life has closed. Practically you will find that all religions, worthy of the name, are agreed in all essentials as to the principles which should guide that life, though they have differed a good deal in the application of those principles under the influence of the currents of thought prevailing at different ages and in different countries.

On the other side is the science which justifies that life, which proves the continued existence after death, and also shows why the course of life, laid down on the practical side, is truly and necessarily the one which will most benefit us in that continued existence.

This side of the question has, up to this time, always been kept secret; at all ages initiates, able to bear and utilize the whole truth, have been secretly

instructed in it; as you truly say "communication with the spirit world has always been preserved in glimpses by special individuals throughout the darkest ages," but every religious system, yet given anywhere to the masses, has been a more or less veiled presentation of this. But *it*, the perfect truth, has been present, though *in abscondito* in the doctrines of all spiritual religions and philosophies, and this perfect truth is Esoteric Theosophy, the proof whereof is that, whether you turn to the book of Sohar, or the dialogues of Plato, or the Vedants or the vision of St. John, the most obscure and exasperatingly unintelligible passages become clear at once, when examined by the light of Theosophy,—nay those astoundingly confused early chapters of Genesis, the despair alike of science and reason, prove to embody though (as usual) in a closely veiled form a great deal of what is absolutely true.

When, therefore, you think to damage Theosophy by pointing out that Jesus Christ nineteen hundred years ago preached the Universal Brotherhood, you overlook that he was only one of the many fruits of that sacred tree, the outermost foliage of which we now call Theosophy, and that that same tree, nineteen hundred years before that—aye and nineteen hundred before that again—had borne other fruit, with the same perfume, the same invigorating and soul-restoring juice, and that if it were not that Christ's precious doctrines, like the similar teachings of all his predecessors, have been smothered by creeds and dogmas invented by spiritually-ignorant men, we should not *now* be repreaching the same old gospel of love to men and peace on earth, of purity, self-sacrifice and Universal Brotherhood.

But you claim as "fatal" to our position that "Brotherhood presupposes Fatherhood," and you add that it appears to you "that Theosophy not merely ignores but proscribes our Father which is in Heaven."

Brotherhood presupposes a common parent, and the existence of such a parent in and through whom we and all things live, move, and have our being, is the very foundation of the truly Monistic creed of Theosophy. We, one and all, nay all things in the universe—minerals, vegetables, animals, men and spirits, body, mind, soul, and spirit—are manifestations of, or evolutes from, the Infinite and Absolute, which is at once the ultimate substance and first cause of all that is or exists. But cognizant of the impossibility of our finite minds, formulating any adequate conception of the Infinite and the Absolute, we shun all approach to personizing the "One and Only," and turn from every form of Anthropomorphism as from idolatry on a gigantic scale. For what difference in principle is there between the man who makes a statue embodying his conception of the Almighty, and then worships that, and those who project into the skies their conception of Him, and constructing there a sort of gigantic image of themselves in their highest moods, proceed to worship that?

Therefore, no doubt we avoid those expressions in which you and many other good people seem to feel a pleasure which tend to personalize, and thereby, as we think, lower the conception of the Infinite.

And we do not talk of our Father which is in Heaven, and who *truly is* "the life of every Human Soul," as "ever at hand hearing and answering our prayers," "numbering all the hairs on our head," and the like, because comforting as may be this doctrine it is not true. We and the whole world and Universe have a common parent who is Infinite and Absolute, and absolutely beyond our finite conception, who *is* the life of every soul, but this Infinite and Absolute only makes himself known by unalterable laws, and the Beings who do guide and govern the universe, and who play to a certain extent the part

you assign to your personal God, are conditioned and finite (though compared with us infinitely high) intelligences.

The Old Testament truly enough tells of men communicating with *God*, but the Gods referred to were *Elohim*, *Adonai*, *El Shaddai*, and the like, what we call Planetary Spirits; *evolutes* like ourselves from the common parent, and who, in other systems and cycles, more or less analogous to our present man-bearing cycle, have developed into what they are now, after having occupied successively positions analogous to all *we* have passed through, and many we have still to pass through, and have yet before them an infinite vista of further progression. Every human being involves the potentiality of the highest Planetary Spirits, and it was not in vain that it was asked, " Know ye not that ye are Gods ?"

So you see you are totally wrong when you talk about our Brotherhood ignoring the One Great Father; but it reverences Him too much to degrade Him by setting up a magnified sublimated edition of ourselves to worship in lieu of Him, and it is too conscious of our own finite capacities to talk glibly and affect a sort of intimate personal knowledge of the Absolute and the Infinite.

I cannot understand how a cultivated person like yourself has not long since withdrawn from this painfully puerile (to use no harsher term) phraseology. You *must* be able to see that the *first* cause, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, must be infinite and absolute ; and you *ought* to be able to realize that he being this it is absolutely impossible for you, finite and conditioned, to form *any* adequate conception of Him, and, therefore, childish for you to talk and write as if He were (as you persuade yourself) an intimate acquaintance. Doubtless His representative is ever with you, your own 7th principle ; a spark of his ineffable glory is ever present to guide

you, but when it comes to the Inscrutable Infinite Source and Cause of all things, silent adoration is the only fitting tribute for the Finite.

You take exception to a passage in which I represent the Brothers as saying, " nay of the great secret we will teach you nothing until by your own free will you have placed your minds under our control;" and you, as it seems to me, disingenuously suppress what follows, to the effect that the entire order has this same security against the misuse of this great secret by any one of its members. Therefore, they only ask from us the security they require from each other. And culpable indeed would they be were they to communicate this secret to any one without this security. You yourself speak, and again correctly, " of the great prevalence" at certain past epochs of the world's history " of magical and diabolical perversions of spiritual truths," and can you not see that to publish to the weak and easily tempted, if not wicked world, this terrible secret would be to renew in all their intensity these magical and diabolical perversions? Do you understand that this secret is the manipulation of the Astral Essence, the ether; that it involves a power to rend mountains, dry up oceans, and level the mightiest cities in ashes in a few seconds? As I write this, Alexandria is burning in a hundred places, but there are places I am told surrounded by the conflagration, where not a spark falls, and why? Because they contain priceless manuscripts of works believed to be lost, Hermetic works enclosing the keys of a thousand mysteries, works the property of the Brotherhood, which Brothers are present guarding, not merely from men but from shot, shell, and fire!

Do you suppose that a power which makes man master of the elements, an unseen, and, therefore, so far as his fellows are concerned, irresponsible master, is to be communicated to men of the present stage of evolution, without the most absolute precautions to guard against its misuse?

It is purely childish to compare the taking such precautions with the Roman Catholic system of mental domination. In some adept schools, doubtless an hierarchical organization may exist analogous to that of the Jesuits, but in this matter there is no domination, only such mesmeric mental relations set on foot, that any attempt to exercise the power is known to the organization, and if that exercise is contrary to the statutes, is frustrated.

All this is, however, quite beyond you yet; you cannot probably even conceive such a relation set up between hundreds of minds, that the thoughts of each are open, if not to all, to all in all grades superior to that to which the mind in question belongs. Yet this is one of the fundamental laws of all adept associations, and could be perfectly *conceived* (though they would not know how to set about it) by all who have really, practically, studied mesmerism to any purpose.

I cannot compliment you on your power of assimilating new facts, when, with the facts carefully stated as they are in Hints No. 1, you write such nonsense as the following, " in a word it appears to me you are setting up these Brothers as your masters in God's place." It is true that we do not talk quite so glibly and lightly of the Infinite as you do, but considering that nine times in that pamphlet it is reiterated that the adepts are not Gods, *merely men* like ourselves, to begin with, but now greatly elevated above most of us in virtue of their learning, knowledge, and purity, I confess your remark seems to me pointless and feeble. And when you go on to say that the respect all must feel (however much they may differ from them on particular points) for men so much wiser and better than themselves is only one form of idolatry, I pause to consider whether you, who actually worship an image of yourself, your imaginary personal God, really know what idolatry means!

However when you get on to your own experiences, and speak of how you have found yourself helped—of asking and having, seeking and finding, knocking and its being opened to you—you are on the firmest of all ground—pure Theosophy.

But mind it was not to your imaginary personal omnipotent God that you owe the having, the finding and the opening, but to the emanation from the impersonal Infinite, to your own 7th principle in fact. It was this, your spirit, the Divine representative, the Emmanual, that when realized by your mind breathed comfort into your soul. You have doubtless accomplished your salvation as you call it, but you have only gone half way. Spiritualize yourself further, and gradually this same spirit that has comforted, cheered, and enlightened you so far, will open out other and higher truths. There is a system and a science by which that development of spiritual cognizance can be facilitated, and with this cognizance of spiritual truths, comes also, when the mind is so directed, a knowledge of natural laws, and with it a power of directing or modifying the operation of these, and this system or science is the grammar of Esoteric Theosophy.

By your pure life and habit of concentrated prayer you are already a Theosophist; it will be your own fault, if following up the clue you already hold in your hand, you do not become an enlightened one, freed from the false conceptions generated by the prejudices surrounded by which your soul has developed; knowing as you are known; and seeing the absolute truth face to face.

Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. Do not rest content with the half truths you have. Call nothing yours till all is won. You have accomplished perhaps the most difficult portion of the task—the spiritual regeneration; you have still to clear your mind of prejudices, and to purify your body.

But this purification of the body is to you, I know, a most monstrous idea; you cannot conceive what the body can have to do with the soul. You seem unable to realize that man, being a compound existence, the several constituents act and re-act upon each other, and yet it is the unavoidable condition of all combinations. If we take an extreme case, as of a man who daily gets drunk, you will probably admit that this will greatly diminish his chance of psychical development. But if the proposition be propounded that everything that tends to stimulate the physical nature, and increase the grossness of the particles, and I may say the density of the physical frame, tends *pro tanto*, to prevent the exercise of the supersensuous faculties or soul senses, you cannot understand it. Let me ask you to read the articles on the Elixir of Life which appeared in the *Theosophist*;* they are by no means so entirely explicit as they seem—even they must in places be read between the lines—but they will at least give you some idea of the *rationale* of the system which so reduces the body as to place it entirely under the control of the will, and so weakens its hold upon the soul as to leave the senses of this latter almost as free to operate as if it had been finally enfranchised by that repulsion we call death.

All true adepts have gone through the training sketched in the paper referred to, and all the higher grades are beyond the ordinary laws of mortality. Die they will and must, in the long run, and glad they are when, their work done to the utmost, they shuffle off their mortal coil to pass to where "beyond these voices there is peace," but their lives yet extend to periods, quite unheard of in the work-a-day world.

You remark, that "one fundamental error underlies all this occultism which is no new thing in the world. It is the idea that spiritual mysteries may be penetrated by natural means, (that the means of prolonging earthly life might be attained by cunning

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* Reprinted, p. 54.

distillations and combinations of natural substances is one phase of this error), but this is no more possible than to find the soul by the subtlest dissection of the body, or the analysis of the substances."

This is such a jumble of truth and error, that I hardly know how to deal with it. Most certainly it is quite as absurd to expect to penetrate spiritual mysteries by natural means (by which I suppose you to mean by the exercise of the physical and normal mental faculties) as it would be to expect to detect the soul by aid of the scalpel. But man's soul being closely allied to his spirit, and being capable by this alliance and its own natural faculties of cognising things spiritual, there is no absurdity in supposing that the soul may penetrate spiritual mysteries. In most men the soul's supersensuous faculties remain dormant until, the fleshly bandages unwound by death, the baby soul, released from swaddling clothes, finds itself for the first time able to utilize its innate capacities to any real purpose. Some men, however, are born with a natural ready separability of body and soul, and in these the soul can exercise, though imperfectly, its inherent faculties, and such men have been the great poets and prophets of the world. Esoteric Theosophy teaches the *rationale* of unwinding, even in this life, the bandages of the soul, and thus enabling it to do *before* death, what otherwise it could not have done until after death. In one sense the means employed, *viz.* the repression of the bodily and the great development of the mental and moral energies, may be said to be natural, because nature is in every thing, and nothing is, or ever was, or ever will be, in the strict sense of the word, supernatural, but these means certainly lead to the acquisition of faculties which, *quoad* the mass of mankind, are superhuman, if not supernatural.

Naturally the extent to which in any person the unwinding of these bandages, without causing

death, is possible, must vary greatly in accordance with differences in physical, mental, and moral development. In some nothing practically is possible in this direction ; in many it can be carried only to a limited extent ; in some few exceptional organizations it can be carried to an extent that places the soul, while the body is yet alive, in even a better position, for exercising its faculties in the unseen world, than, but for the special training of Esoteric Theosophy, it would have enjoyed for long after death. In all cases death is approached during this training ; often this latter has to be discontinued on pain of death ; always great caution and skilled guidance is necessary for the advancing Neophyte. Bulwer, who knew much about these matters, and indeed met two of the Brothers in Italy, knew perfectly well what he was about when he personified the dangers of the progress in his "Demon or Dweller of Threshold," and many a rash Neophyte struggling to force his way into the Arcana without due preparation has in shattered nerves, and enfeebled mental and bodily organization experienced the long persistent hauntings of this Demon.

If you now fail to realize that it is by something more than what you call natural means, that adepts have, from age to age, penetrated the spiritual mysteries of the universe, I am sorry for you. If you or others say, "well even so, after all what good does it do them?" The reply is simply that it is in itself the highest good attainable by man. It is not merely that in this life it gives him a full and perfect knowledge of the conditions of the next and future lives, it not only shows him certainly the course of life here that will most profit him and his fellows, further on in the journey, but it allows him to start at death on his new career not a mere baby soul just released from swadling clothes, uncertain where to go and what to do and exposed to innumerable influences, a straw that will be caught into a vortex and *nolens volens* disposed of under fixed laws,

but as an adult and experienced traveller familiar with the whole route and able to a great extent to direct and control his own future destinies. What? "This is really too much!" Well I am sorry—but it is a fact all the same as you will fully recognize one day —if not in this present earth life.

But to return to your remarks. No adept or occultist ever thought that life could be prolonged by cunning distillations, in the sense in which you use the word; all the writings of the alchemists and kabalists are written in symbolical language. The mercury, the salt, and the sulphur, are purely symbols, as you may gather if you take the trouble to study carefully, reading between the lines, the DOGME ET RITUEL DE LA HAUTE MAGIE. The great *Athanor* had to be sublimed. The Magnum Opus, the transmutation of the baser metals into gold, had to be performed in the laboratory of the soul. Read intelligently any of the great kabalistic works, any of the great alchemists, and then turning to those papers on the Elixir of Life* to which I previously referred you, if you cannot see that here in this latter you have a clear exposition, for the first time in the history of the world, of one of the profoundest mysteries of all magicians, alchemists, kabalists, and the like, in fact of "*le grand œuvre*," it is simply that you still lack the spiritual insight to complete the untying of the more than half disentangled knot.

You and others, the vast majority of mankind, who laugh at the idea of prolonging life by cunning distillations, are really those most to be laughed at, in that, taking the embroidered veils of words, with which the old adepts shrouded their knowledge from the profane, for the real substance, you have failed (as they *meant* all destitute of spiritual insight to fail) to catch even a glimpse of those great truths that they put on record, but only for those

* *Vide p.* 54.

worthy to receive them. In parables ever have the seers spoken, nor has as it been the Master only who has said—"he that has ears to hear let him hear!"

Truly, it is strange how you repeat Theosophic truths without in the smallest degree understanding their purport, any more than you understand the equally allegorical expressions of the alchemists. You say—"Moreover we are told that the comforter or Spirit of truth, who comes when man has risen from the death of selfishness and mere earthliness to the life of obedience to his living God, will lead us unto all truth." Why this is the very essence of Esoteric Theosophy. What is the coming of the Holy Ghost, what the *magnum opus*, but the opening of the soul's eyes, following on the annihilation of self and earthly desires, and the life of obedience to the living God, that emanation of the Absolute and Infinite ever with man until he is utterly lost which we call the 7th principle, and you may call God, conscience, Christ or what you like. It is this destruction of selfishness and worldliness, this life of perfect purity and love, which constitutes the "sublimation of the great Athanor," and an Adept in the true sense of the word is only a man on whom has descended, to use apostolic language, the Holy Ghost in all its power and with all its gifts. Christians generally, but specially you Swedenborgians, have the letter of much of the truth, but you, none of you, attain to the spirit in its entirety. Alike in your writings and those of numbers of earnest Christians of other sects, I meet with whole pages, in which the true doctrines are laid down faultlessly, though to a certain extent in parables, and yet when one comes to look into the matter, one finds that the writers themselves (their minds still fettered by the religious prejudices forged around them in childhood) couple altogether imperfect significations with the correct and comprehensive language they employ.

If you say "then according to this, Theosophy is only a form of Christianity," I reply that Theosophy was what Christ undoubtedly taught, Exoteric Theosophy openly to the world as in the sermon on the Mount, (which may be paralleled verse by verse in Buddha's teachings) and the Esotoric in parables, to a certain extent, and fully to one at least of his followers, as proved by the Revelations of St. John, which contain all the secret doctrines of the Highest Theosophy, albeit sealed from the knowledge of all non-initiates. But the Christianity of the great churches bears no resemblance to the preachings of the Master; and these, his preachings even, have come down to us in a most imperfect form, and, as they stand, are nothing more than a repetition of a portion of the teachings of Buddha, and other ancient Eastern religious teachers, some of whose writings date back to at least 1200, and our teachers say nearly double that number of years before Christ. All these teachings have had a common source, all these teachers have had a common teaching, (it was not for nothing that Jesus is represented as going down into Egypt) and that teaching that source is the ancient wisdom religion of the world which we now *faute de mieux* represent by the Greek term Theosophy.

I see you are very incredulous about Koot Hoomi having written the letters published in the "Occult World," and you clench as you think the argument against their authenticity by saying that if a Hindoo recluse could write these letters, then Johnson or Fielding might have written the Vedas. Well, if Johnson or Fielding had been high adepts, they might just as well have written any Sanscrit work as any English one, provided only that they had had amongst their disciples, united to them by magnetic bands, any good Sanscrit scholar. Koot Hoomi, though a fair English scholar, educated in Germany and England, and quite able to write good English, would doubtless, from want of practice,

have found, at any rate at first, some trouble in writing to us had he not been able to use the brains of others. And it is not only in English that he can write like an Englishman ; he can write in any and every language known to any of his regular disciples as well as any of them can, even though he may not himself *know* in the ordinary sense of the term one word of that language. For he formulates the ideas he desires to express, impresses them by the power of his will on the brain, of whose services he avails himself, and then reads off the verbal exposition that arises from that brain in response to that impression, and has all he requires. Of course, to enable the adept to utilize thus another person's brains, that other must have been placed in the strictest magnetic relation with him, and must have become his true disciple, as Colonel Olcott is, not merely a lay-pupil as I was. How often in the commencement of our correspondence, when K. H. had not for long years had occasion to write English, he did avail himself of Olcott's faculties, was apparent from the frequent Americanisms that adorned (*or* disfigured, take your choice) his letters, but these peculiarities have almost disappeared now that for two years he has been in constant correspondence, and direct intercourse with us English.

Setting, however, all this aside, these letters simply are K. H.'s, *and he* having been for a time my immediate master teaching me directly, I presume I ought to know. You may set me down as a lunatic or a liar, but the question no longer remains for me one in regard to which I can argue.

One word more, though this, as the facts stand, scarcely bears upon the question. You must not forget that the higher caste, purer bred natives of India, possess greater capacities for acquiring foreign languages than the majority of Europeans. I know at least a score who can speak and write English better than ninety-nine out of every hundred English gentlemen, two or

three of them are better speakers than any European we have had in India during the last thirty years, and one, the brother of a friend of mine, admittedly writes and lectures in German as well as any German. So even had Koot Hoomi no exceptional resources to fall back upon, there would have been nothing incredible (he being a high-bred Hindoo whose ancestors for nearly 4,000 years have been highly civilized) in his writing those letters which to you seem so unlike the possible productions of a Hindoo recluse.

As for the case of the unhappy girl you refer to, her fate should be a warning to those spiritualists who recklessly place themselves (practically bodies and souls) at the disposal of invisible entities of whose nature and antecedents they have absolutely no certain knowledge—entities almost without exception, more or less bad. But there is nothing to surprise me in this case, seeing that it is only a typical instance of a class of cases; known equally to the ancient Hindus, the kabalists and the demonologists of the middle ages. The latter designated the male visitants (like the one who appears to have consorted with this poor girl) the "spiritual husbands" in fact of America, *incubi,* while the female visitants, the "spiritual wives" were called *succubi.*

You will find a full explanation of these *incubi* and *succubi* in Fragments of Occult Truth, No. III.

It is very good of you, my dear friend, to say that if Theosophy is of any use or comfort to me, you would be sorry to deprive me—you would not try to deprive me—of my satisfaction in it. Just so, some kindly-minded miner, bred and born in the deep levels whence he has never ascended to the surface, might cheer the heart of some denizen of the upper earth, by the assurance that if the sun was any use or comfort to him, he, the miner, would be sorry to deprive him, would not try to deprive him of his satisfaction

in it. Believe me that once Theosophy has opened the soul's eyes to the spiritual Sun, it were easier to deprive the ordinary man of his knowledge of and pleasure in the physical sun, than to deprive the Theosophist of his satisfaction in that higher light.

Should you retort that if this be so, then, truly, there seem but few Theosophists whose soul's eyes *have* been opened, I cannot contest the point. The great majority of Theosophists are little more than Theosophists in name; they have not yet realized that

> "Within themselves deliverance must be sought,
> That each his own prison makes."

Aye, and that all the doors and windows of that prison, out of which the fettered soul might haply peep, are wholly blocked up with the cares and desires, if not also with the sins, of this delusive dream that the soul-blind prize, and miscall—life.

But you can no more lead the miner whose entire life has been passed in the deep underground workings, or the man blind from birth, to realize the sun, than you can lead the vast bulk of mankind, of the present races, to realize that higher light to which Esoteric Theosophy, rightly understood and rightly followed, leads. The time, however, is coming; stray precursors of the coming higher race have appeared, some have passed on, some are still on earth. Every decade will now increase their number, and till they preponderate there will be no general acceptance of esotericism.

In the meantime a handful of us, clumsy labourers, though to a certain extent directed by experts, are sowing sadly enough, sowing knee deep in the mire of sin and sensuality, buffeted by the ridicule, drenched by the pitiless calumny of the heedless world, certain never to see much fruit of our labours, content with the knowledge that long after *we* have passed on,

after many many days, the bread that we are casting on the waters will be found and feed many.

To one point I notice that you take objection, *viz.*, the warning all receive that a man may spend his whole life in carrying out the views and wishes of the adepts, and yet make but little progress after all.

Now in the first place can you not understand that men are differently gifted. Beethoven might have had a devoted servant, who spent his whole life in obedience to him, who reverenced him and loved music and whom Beethoven truly desired to teach, but who, for want of capacity, never made any progress, worth speaking of, as a musician. Similarly any one of the adepts may have a most devoted disciple, who even by a life's devotion fails to make any great progress in occultism. He will of course be *taught* all vital truths (these will now gradually be placed within the reach of *all* mankind, disciples or not); but owing to his defective organization, physical, or spiritual, or both, he will never acquire command over the powers of nature, and never be able to verify for himself many of these truths, and, as such cases occur, and I believe, at times unexpectedly, some slight overlooked defect suddenly starting out into prominence to bar further progress (in *this* particular life) surely such a warning is only just?

But again obedience to the behests of any Adepts however exaited can never by itself make an adept; besides working for others outside, the aspirant must work for himself inside. He must change his whole inner nature, and this depends on no Brother, but solely on himself.

So you see there is nothing at all unreasonable in the warning that a man may devote his whole life to the service of the adepts, and yet himself fail to secure any very marked return for his services in

this life. But where this happens, it will never have been from the fault of any one but himself, nay it will as likely as not be the result of no fault, in this life, of his even, but only of his misfortune in being born without certain necessary organic capacities.

At the same time, though in this particular life, the man may make little or no progress, it must not be supposed that he gains nothing; on the contrary his future development must necessarily be immensely facilitated, by the pure and self-denying life that he must lead as a preliminary to establishing any real relations with any adepts. It is a case in which nothing (except the vanities of the world) can be lost, and in which the gain (sooner or later) is certain.

I must not by the way quite overlook a mistake you make when you "talk of conjugal intercourse being represented (by the Brothers) as an infringement of chastity." Nothing of the kind is ever represented. Neither duly regulated conjugal intercourse, nor the use of wine in moderation, nor the eating of meat are represented as sins. As regards the use of liquor it is doubtless held that, as St. Paul says, though all things are lawful, all things (and this particular one in especial) are not expedient. Considering that almost throughout the world, in the present day, fully half the sin, suffering, physical and mental, and even crime, results from the abuse of alcoholic liquors, all adepts feel very strongly that all men who really love their race, should steadily set their faces against and try by advice, and above all *example* (oh! what a magic there is in this!) to stamp out the use of these. But this is a matter of opinion, and they are the last people to dogmatize on such points; but what they do say is that even granting (which they by no means admit) that all these things are absolutely blameless and innocuous to the soul's future progress, still as a matter of fact unless they do absolutely abstain from sexual intercourse, alcoholic liquors, and

animal food, not one person in ten thousand can possibly bring their bodies into such a state as will permit the free development of their super-sensuous faculties or soul senses.

If you have faith, well and good, that takes the place of knowledge, and will enable you to live and die happily ; but if your faith is weak, if you cannot feel happy and satisfied about death and the life beyond, if you desire to acquire certain knowledge as to these matters, "then" say they, "we who have ourselves made the experiment, tell you as a fact that (amongst other preparations) you must give up these three things absolutely!"

You may be content with your own position, and I doubt not rightly so. I know you have fought a good fight and have every reason to look forward to the victor's wreath. But there are many who, on only the grounds you possess, could not be so. For, if you reflect, you have no tittle of evidence to support your creed; you believe only just so much of the Bible as pleases you, and that you interpret according to very peculiar canons; and you accept as much of Swedenborg's teachings as you approve ; but of all you do accept, the sole criterion is that it commends itself to your mind. But this is not evidence, and you can give no reason for the faith that is in you, and you could not therefore possibly convince any one else. And yet you are satisfied; and to a certain extent rightly so, because you have by your life and by concentrated prayer awakened your soul's senses, and it is these which assure you that, on the whole, you are on the right road. But these senses are only partially awakened, they are still hemmed in closely by dense matter, and oppressed by physical activities, and if you desire entirely to enfranchise them, and so learn for yourself the *whole* truth (for with all its beauty what you have is only a fragment),

you have, *nolens volens*, and without any reference to whether there is or is not anything intrinsically wrong in them, to abstain absolutely from animal food, and Luther's two stand by's "Wein und Weib"! If you don't like this I am sorry, but it is a melancholy fact that in this world things too generally decline to square with our predelictions. One has to make the best of them. Things, remember, are not true, because we like them, but, if we are wise, we like the things that are true.

You are not one of them, but many would here Pilate-like exclaim: What *is* truth? Now in regard to things spiritual, that system alone to which theosophy opens the door can show any one certainly the truth. The body has senses to cognize things physical, the soul to cognize those spiritual; just as it would be folly to consult a stranger standing inside a closed and white-washed window, as to the landscape stretching outside that window; so it is absurd to consult those, the windows of whose souls are blocked with matter, as to the outlook into the spiritual world. A good many earnest pious men manage, somehow, to scrape off a certain limited quantity of the obstructing medium, and obtain more or less limited glimpses, seen as through a glass darkly, of what is beyond; but there is only one possible method by which the obstruction can be entirely dissolved away, and a perfect view obtained, and the receipt for this is now only known in the inner esoteric circle of the Theosophical Society, in other words to the august associations of all of which that society, though the immediate offspring of one, is the outward and visible sign.

You talk about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but it is clear that you do not know that this knowledge is really and truly that very knowledge of which the adepts are the sole surviving custodians; still less do you appear to know that the eating of the fruit of that tree, which truly brings upon man

such ruin, is the use of that knowledge for one's own selfish or worldly good. The tree indeed is fair, worthy to grace the paradise of the purest souls, but the eating of its fruit, the prostitution of spiritual power to selfish earthly purposes, is the unpardonable sin, and to this day the sentence of death pronounced from the beginning against all who commit it, remains unrevoked.

"In the day that thou shalt eat thereof thou shalt surely die."

Yet ignorant of all that lies behind, you sneer at those, who, knowing all, insist upon the most rigid precautions to prevent the mass of foolish Adams and Eves, the mass of mankind, acquiring knowledge and power that they would certainly misuse, not only to their own destruction but to the ruin of the world.

But it seems almost useless to attack joint by joint your letter, which like a wounded serpent drags its weary length along. I began writing in the hopes of opening your eyes, and I close feeling the hopelessness of the task, blinded as you are by preconceived notions.

You quote purely theosophic precepts such as "he that doeth the will of my father that is in heaven he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," which merely means that a life of purity bears necessarily the fruit of spiritual enlightenment, as much a root doctrine of Theosophy and of Confucianism, Vedantism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, off-shoots of Theosophy, as it is of Christianity, and seem to fancy you are setting up a new Christian light to guide the footsteps of the eternal wisdom religion. Why an Andamanese might as well come to dispute the correctness of your creed, and patronizingly suggest to you as the evidence of the superiority of his own; that one of its leading commandments was "thou shalt not commit adultery"!

You say, how much better to live the life of the Christian Gospel, but my dear friend, the life of the Esoteric Theosophist, (if he be a true theosophist) *is* the life of the Christian Gospel. But remember the Gospel was only the teaching for the multitude it was only exoteric Christianity. To Saint John, at least, Christ seems to have taught the inner truths, and in the Apocalypse you find a resumè of the secrets of the highest initiations, and of the fundamental doctrines of Esoteric Theosophy.

But how to make you realize this? Your letter shows you throughout as a good though unenlightened Theosophist greatly spiritualized by a good life and by habits of spiritual concentration, which you call prayer; but, with all that, still blundering in the darkness, created by the mass of prejudices and superstitions in the midst of which you have developed, unable to perceive and utilize the means so close to your hands, which would replace in all matters spiritual, faith and speculation by knowledge and certainty, and halting complacently at the half-way-house, fully persuaded that you have accomplished your journey.

Do I expect you to believe all this? Candidly speaking, on reflection, I do not. Few and far between are those of the existing humanity that will, or can, accept the whole truth.

But in a hundred ways, and through innumerable agencies, the way for the acceptance of this is being prepared. We do not expect much credence or many supporters in Europe in our own time. No great religious reform ever made much progress in a single generation. Now is our seed-time, and though we shall not be here in our present conscious personalities to rejoice, there is a glorious harvest-time to come, in the fruits of which we and you alike will share.

Let me explain; let me give you at any rate something new to you; you will laugh it to scorn, for

it will not in any way adapt itself to your Theogony, but it is a truth all the same.

For countless myriads of myriads of ages, the entity that you call your soul, has been developing. First in three kingdoms, two of them subjective and incomprehensible to the uninitiated, and after passing through innumerable stages and states in these, it entered fairly its career in the material world, in the mineral kingdom. It passed from planet to planet (of *our* cycle) occupying in each a series of mineral encasements or inmetaliations.

The whole round of the various planets belonging to our man-bearing cycle, having been accomplished in the mineral kingdom, the entity started on a similar round in the vegetable kingdom, and this accomplished, on a similar round in the animal kingdom. Millions of years were thus passed, and thousands of existences had been passed through, before the entity had attained a development fitting it to appear in the lowest form of man; a physical Ape-man, not morally responsible.

Now man (excluding those who after attaining the stage of moral responsibility are shipwrecked by the way) has many complete rounds to make of the entire cycle of the planets. And in each planet, in each round, he has many lives to live. At a certain stage of his evolution, when certain portions of his less material elements are fully developed, he becomes morally responsible.

You look with either pity or wonder on poor undeveloped creatures like the Andamanese, Australians and Esquimaux, but these only differ from you and the mass of mankind in having lived far fewer man-lives. As they *are*, so you once *were*, and as you are so will they be later.

During each round the entity has to live several lives in several races.

Now if we say that the mass of mankind are in the higher races of the 4th round, then these Esquimaux, &c., are in the later races of the 3rd round.

Almost the whole of mankind has got through the 3rd round, only a few stragglers still remain to find such incarnations, and in a very short time the 3rd round men will have become extinct. Even of the 4th round immense numbers have passed on, and a large number of the more spiritual-minded men, alike of the East and West, are in quite the highest races of the 4th round. Already a few stragglers of the lowest race of the 5th round have made their appearance, but a long period must elapse before these cease to be other than the rare efflorescence of an age, and until they cease to be this, the eternal wisdom religion, Theosophy in its broadest sense, can never become universally accepted.

But of the higher races of the 4th round men a certain proportion possess the spiritual development necessary to permit an assimilation of the pure truth, and for these (and year by year they are increasing in number, while the proportion of the lower races is diminishing) we are working, knowing that not one true word will be wasted, though many such may be long without finding natures sufficiently developed, and sufficiently free from preconceptions, in which to germinate.

Now pray do not think that dissatisfied with your rejection of my veritable flying fish, I am revenging myself by concluding with a Pharaoh's Chariot Wheel narrative! Indeed, it is not so, all I have said above of man's development, is, if rightly grasped, absolutely true.

He that hath ears to hear, let him understand.

Yours, &c.

H. X.

APPENDIX.

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THE "ELIXIR OF LIFE."

(From a Chela's Diary.)*

By G......M......F. T. S.

"*And Enoch walked with the Elohim, and the Elohim took him.*"—Genesis.

Introduction.

[The curious information—for whatsoever else the world may think of it, it will doubtless be acknowledged to be that—contained in the article that follows, merits a few words of introduction. The details given in it on the subject of what has always been considered as one of the darkest and most strictly guarded of the mysteries of the initiation into occultism—from the days of the *Rishis* until those of the Theosophical Society—came to the knowledge of the author in a way that would seem to the ordinary run of Europeans a strange and supernatural manner. He himself, however, we may assure the reader, is a most thorough disbeliever in the *Supernatural*, though he has learned too much to limit the capabilities of the *natural* as some do. Further on, he has to make the following confession of his own belief regarding it. It will be apparent from a careful perusal of the facts, that if the matter be really as stated therein, the author cannot himself be an adept of high grade, as the article in such a case *would never have been written*. Nor does he pretend to be one. He is, or rather was, for a few years an humble *Chela*. Hence, the converse must consequently be also true, that as regards the higher stages of the mystery he can have no personal experience, but speaks of it only as a close observer left to his own surmises—and no more. He may, therefore, boldly state that during, and notwithstanding his unfortunately rather too short stay with some adepts, he has by actual experiment and observation verified some of the less transcendental or incipient parts of the "*Course*." And, though it will be impossible for him to give positive testimony as to what lies beyond, he may yet mention that all his own course of study, training and experience, long, severe, and dangerous as it has often been, leads him to the conviction that everything is really, as stated, save some details *purposely veiled*. For causes which cannot be explained to the public, he himself may be unable or unwilling to use the secret he has gained access to. For all that, he is permitted by one to whom all his reverential affection and gratitude are due—his last *guru*—to divulge for the benefit of Science and Man, and specially for the good of those who are courageous enough to personally make the experiment the following astounding particulars of the occult methods for prolonged life to a period far beyond the common one.—G.M.]

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* A *Chela* is the pupil and disciple of an initiation *Guru or Master*.—Ed.

Probably one of the first considerations which move the worldly-minded at present, to solicit initiation into Theosophy is the belief, or hope, that immediately on joining, some extraordinary advantage over the rest of mankind is to be conferred upon the candidate. Some even think that the ultimate result of their initiation will perhaps be exemption from that dissolution which is called the common lot of mankind. The traditions of the "Elixir of Life," said to be in the possession of Kabalists and Alchemists, are still cherished by students of Mediæval Occultism—in Europe. The allegory of the *Ab-è Hyat*, or *Water of Life*, is still credited as a fact by the degraded remnants of the Asiatic esoteric sects ignorant of the *real* Great Secret. The "pungent and fiery Essence," by which Zanoni renewed his existence, still fires the imagination of modern idealists as a possible scientific discovery of the Future.

Theosophically, though the fact is authoritatively declared to be true, the abovenamed conceptions of the mode of procedure leading to the realisation of the fact, are *known* to be false. The reader may or may not believe it; but as a matter of fact. Thèsophical Occultists claim to have communication with (living) Intelligences of an infinitely wider range of observation than is contemplated by the utmost aspirations of Modern Science, all the present "Adepts" of Europe and America—dabblers in the Kabala—notwithstanding. But far even as those superior Intelligences have investigated (or, if preferred, are alleged to have investigated), and remotely as they may have searched by the help of implication and analogy, even *They* have failed to discover in the Infinity anything permanent but—Space. All is Subject to Change. Reflection, therefore, will easily suggest to the reader the further logical inference that in a Universe which is essentially unpermanent in its conditions, nothing can confer permanency. Therefore, no possible substance, even if drawn from the depths of Infinity; no imaginable combination of drugs, whether of our earth or any other, though compounded by even the Highest Intelligence; no system of life or discipline, though directed by the sternest determination and skill, could possibly produce Immutability. For in the universe of solar systems, wherever and however investigated, Immutability necessitates "Non Being" in the physical sense given it by the Theists—Non Being being *nothing* in the narrow conceptions of *Western* Religionists—a *reductio ad absurdum*. This is a gratuitous insult even when

applied to the *pseudo*-Christian or ecclesiastical Jehovite idea of God.

Consequently, it will be seen that the common ideal conception of "Immortality" is not only essentially wrong, but a physical and metaphysical impossibility. The idea, whether cherished by Theosophists or non-Theosophists, by Christians or Spiritualists, by Materialists or Idealists, is a chimerical illusion. But the actual prolongation of human life is possible for a time so long as to appear miraculous and incredible to those who regard our span of existence as necessarily limited to at most a couple of hundred years. We may break, as it were, the shock of Death, and instead of dying, change a sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a brighter light. And this may be made so gradual that the passage from one state of existence to another shall have its friction minimised so as to be practically imperceptible. This is a very different matter, and quite within the reach of Occult Science. In this, as in all other cases, means properly directed will gain their ends, and causes produce effects. Of course, and the only question is, what are these causes, and how, in their turn, are they to be produced. To lift, as far as may be allowed, the veil of this department of Occultism, is the object of the present article.

We must premise by reminding the reader of two Theosophic doctrines, often inculcated in "Isis" as well as in various "articles" in this and other magazines. They are (*a*) that ultimately the Kosmos is *one*—one under infinite variations and manifestations, and (*b*) the so-called Man is a "compound being"—composite not only in the exoteric scientific sense of being a congeries of living so-called material Units, but also in the esoteric sense of being a succession of seven forms or parts of itself, interblended with each other. To put it more clearly we might say that the more ethereal forms are but duplicates of the same aspect,—each finer one lying within the inter-atomic spaces of the next grosser. We would have the reader understand that these are no subtleties, no "spiritualities" at all in the Christo-Spiritualistic sense. In the actual man reflected in your mirror are really several men, or several parts of one composite man ; each the exact counterpart of the other, but the "atomic conditions" (for want of a better word) of each of which are so arranged that its atoms interpenetrate those of the next "grosser" form. It does not, for our present purpose, matter how the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Bud-

dhists, Kabalists, or Vedantists, count, separate, classify, arrange or name these, as that war of terms may be postponed to another occasion. Neither does it matter what relation each of these men has to various "elements" of the Kosmos of which he forms a part. This knowledge, though of vital importance otherwise, need not be explained or discussed now. Nor does it much more concern us that the Scientists deny the existence of such an arrangement, because their instruments are inadequate to make their senses perceive it. We will simply reply—"get better instruments and keener senses, and *eventually* you will."

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the Elixir of Life, and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way: while modern, or the so-called exact science—laughs at it.

So then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined—literally, *not* metaphorically—to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil or body, and hatch out of it clothed in our next. This "next" is not spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process (hints of which will be found further on) we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual visible material body—MAN, so called; though, in fact, but his outer shell—to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact.

We see, moreover, that in process of time any cut or lesion upon skin, however flesh-deep, has a tendency to replace the lost, and reunite the severed parts together. A piece of lost cuticle will be very soon replaced with another skin, mixing flesh with other flesh. Hence, if a man partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin,—so our astral, vital body—the fourth of the *seven* (having attracted and assimilated to itself the second) and which is so much more ethereal than the physical one—may

be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old particles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them.........We can say no more. The Magdalene is not the only one who could be accused of having "*seven* spirits" in her, tho' the men who have a lesser number of spirits (what a misnomer that word!) in them, are not few or exceptional. These are the frequent failures of nature—the incomplete men and women.* Each of these has in turn to survive the preceding and more dense one, and then *die*. The exception is the *sixth* when absorbed into and blended with the *seventh*. The "Dhatu"† of the old Hindu physiologist had a dual meaning, the esoteric side of which corresponds with the Tibetan "Zung" (seven principles of the body).

We, Asiatics, have a proverb, probably handed down to us, and by the Hindus repeated ignorantly, as to its esoteric meaning. It has been known ever since the old Rishis mingled familiarly with the simple and noble people they taught and led on. The Devas had whispered into every man's ear—*Thou only*—if thou wilt—art "immortal." Combine with this the saying of a Western author that if any man could just realise for an instant that he had to die some day, he would die that instant. The *Illuminated* will perceive that between these two sayings, rightly understood, stands revealed the whole secret of LONGEVITY. We only die when our will ceases to be strong enough to make us live. In the majority of cases, death comes when the torture and vital exhaustion accompanying a rapid change in our physical conditions becomes so intense as to weaken, for one single instant, our "clutch on life," or the tenacity of the WILL to exist. Till then, however severe may be the disease, however sharp the pang, we are only sick or wounded, as the case may be. This explains the cases of sudden deaths from joy,

* This is not to be taken as meaning that such persons are thoroughly destitute of some one or several of the seven principles: a man born without an arm has still its ethereal counterpart; but that they are so latent that they cannot be developed, and consequently are to be considered as non-existing.—ED.

† Dhatu—the seven principal substances of the human body—chyle, flesh, blood, fat, bones, marrow, semen.

fright, pain, grief, or such other causes. The sense of a life-task consummated, of the worthlessness of one's existence, *if sufficiently realised,* is sufficient to kill a person as surely as poison or a rifle-bullet. On the other hand, a stern determination to continue to live, has, in fact, carried many past *the crisis* of the most mortal disease, in full safety.

First, then, must be the determination—the WILL—the conviction of certainty, to survive and continue.* Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment's relaxation.* In a word, the would-be "Immortal" must be on his watch night and day, guarding Self against—Himself. To live, to Live—to LIVE—must be his unswerving resolve. He must as little as possible allow himself to be turned aside from it. It may be said that this is the most concentrated form of selfishness,—that it is utterly opposed to our Theosophic professions of benevolence, and disinterestedness, and regard for the good of humanity. Well, viewed in a short-sighted way, it is so. But to do good, as in every thing else, a man *must have* time and materials to work with,

* Col. Olcott has epigrammatically explained the creative or rather the recreative power of the Will, in his *Buddhist Catechism.* He there shows—of course, speaking on behalf of the Southern Buddhists—that this Will to live, if not extinguished in the present life, leaps over the chasm of bodily death, and recombines the *Skandhas,* or groups of qualities that made up the individual into a new personality. Man is, therefore, reborn as the result of his own unsatisfied yearning for objective existence. Col. Olcott puts it in this way:

Q. 123......*What is that, in man, which gives him the impression of having a permanent individuality?*

"A. *Tanha,* or the unsatisfied desire for existence. The being having done that for which he must be rewarded or punished in future, and having *Tanha,* will have a rebirth through the influence of *Karma.*

Q. 124. *What is it that is reborn?*

A. A new aggregation of Skandhas, or individuality, caused by the last yearnings of the dying person.

Q 128. *To what cause must we attribute the differences in the combination of the Five Skandhas which make every individual differ from every other individual?*

A. To the *Karma* of the individual in the next preceding birth.

Q. 129. *What is the force or energy that is at work, under the guidance of Karma, to produce the new being?*

A. *Tanha*—the "Will to Live."

and this is a necessary means to the acquirement of powers by which infinitely more good can be done than without them. When these are once mastered, the opportunities to use them will arrive, for there comes a moment when no exertion or restless watch are any more needed: the moment, when the turning point is safely passed. For the present, as we deal with aspirants and not with advanced *chelas*, in the first stage a determined, dogged resolution, and an enlightened concentration of Self on Self, are all that is absolutely necessary. It must not, however, be considered that the candidate is required to be unhuman or brutal in his negligence of others. Such a recklessly selfish course would be as injurious to him as the contrary one of expending his vital energy on the gratification of his physical desires. All that is required from him is a purely negative attitude. Until the POINT is reached, he must not "lay out" his energy in lavish or fiery devotion to any cause, however noble, however "good," however elevated.* Such, we can solemnly assure the reader, would bring its reward in many ways—perhaps in another life, perhaps in this world, but it would tend to shorten the existence it is desired to preserve, as surely as self-indulgence and profligacy. That is why very few of the truly great men of the world (of course, the unprincipled adventurers who have applied great powers to bad uses are out of the question)—the martyrs, the heroes, the founders of religions, the liberators of nations, the leaders of reforms—ever became members of the long-lived "Brotherhood of Adepts" who were by some and for long years accused of *selfishness*. (And that is also why, the Yogis, and the Fakirs of modern India—most of whom are acting now but on the *dead-letter* tradition, are required if they would be considered living up to the principles of their profession—to appear *entirely dead* to every inward feeling or emotion). Notwithstanding the purity of their hearts, the greatness of their aspirations, the dis-

* On page 151 of Mr. Sinnett's *Occult World*, the author's much abused, and still more doubted correspondent assures him that none yet of his "degree are like the stern hero of Bulwer's" Zanoni..."the heartless morally dried up mummies some would fancy us to be"...and adds that few of them "would care to play the part in life of a dessicated pansy between the leaves of a volume of solemn poetry." But our adept omits saying that *one or two degrees higher*, and he will have to submit for a period of years to such a mummifying process unless, indeed, he would voluntarily give up a life-long labour and—DIE.—ED.

interestedness of their self-sacrifice, they *could not live for they had missed the hour.* They may at times have exercised powers which the world called miraculous; they may have electrified man and compelled Nature by fiery and self-devoted Will; they may have been possessed of a so-called superhuman intelligence; they may have even had knowledge of, and communion with, members of our own occult Brotherhood; but, having deliberately resolved to devote their vital energy to the welfare of others, rather than to themselves they have surrendered life; and, when perishing on the cross or the scaffold, or falling, sword in hand, upon the battle-field, or sinking exhausted after a successful consummation of the life-object, on death-beds in their chambers, they have all alike had to cry out at last: "Eloh Eloh-Lama Sabachthani!"

So far so good. But, given the will to live however powerful, we have seen that in the ordinary course of mundane life, the throes of dissolution cannot be checked. The desperate, and again and again renewed, struggle of the Kosmic elements to proceed with a career of change despite the will that is checking them, like a pair of runaway horses struggling against the determined driver holding them in, are so cumulatively powerful, that the utmost efforts of the *untrained* human will acting within an *unprepared* body become ultimately useless. The highest intrepidity of the bravest soldier; the intensest desire of the yearning lover; the hungry greed of the unsatisfied miser; the most undoubting faith of the sternest fanatic; the practised insensibility to pain of the hardiest red Indian brave or half-trained Hindu Yogi; the most deliberate philosophy of the calmest thinker—all alike fail at last. Indeed, sceptics will allege in opposition to the verities of this article that, as a matter of experience, it is often observed that the mildest and most irresolute of minds and the weakest of physical frames are often seen to resist "Death" longer than the powerful will of the high-spirited and obstinately-egotistic man, and the iron frame of the labourer, the warrior and the athlete. In reality, however, the key to the secret of these apparently contradictory phenomena is the true conception of the very thing we have already said. If the physical development of the gross "outer shell" proceeds on parallel lines and at an equal rate with that of the will, it stands to reason that no advantage *for the purpose of overcoming it,* is attained by the latter. The acquisition of improved breechloaders by one

modern army confers no absolute superiority if the enemy also becomes possessed of them. Consequently it will be at once apparent, to those who think on the subject, that much of the training by which what is known as "a powerful and determined nature," perfects itself for its own purposes on the stage of the visible world, necessitating and *being useless* without a parallel development of the "gross" and so-called animal frame, is, in short, neutralised, for the purpose at present treated of, by the fact that its own action has armed the enemy with weapons equal to its own. The *violence* of the impulse to dissolution is rendered equal to the will to oppose it; and being gradually cumulative, while the will-power is gradually exhausted, the former triumphs at last. On the other hand, it may happen that an essentially weak and vacillating will-power, residing in a weak and undeveloped animal frame, may be so *reinforced* by some unsatisfied desire—the *Ichcha* (*wish*,)—as it is called by the Indian Occultists (as, for instance, a mother's heart yearning to remain and support her fatherless children)—as to keep down and vanquish, for a short time, the physical throes of a body to which it has become temporarily superior.

The whole *rationale* then, of the first condition of continued existence in this world, is (*a*) the development of a Will so powerful as to overcome the hereditary (in a Darwinian sense) tendencies of the atoms composing the "gross" and palpable animal frame, to hurry on at a particular period in a certain course of kosmic change; and (*b*) to so weaken the concrete action of that animal frame as to make it more amenable to the power of the Will. To defeat an army, *you must demoralise and throw it into disorder.*

To do this then, is the real object of all the rites, ceremonies, fasts, "prayers," meditations, initiations and procedures of self-discipline enjoined by various esoteric Eastern sects, from that course of pure and elevated aspiration which leads to the higher phases of Adeptism Real, down to the fearful and disgusting ordeals which the adherent of the "Left-hand-Road" has to pass through, all the time maintaining his equilibrium. The procedures have their merits and their demerits, their separate uses and abuses, their essential and non-essential parts, their various veils, mummeries, and labyrinths. But in all, the result aimed at is reached, if by different processes. The Will is strengthened, encouraged and directed, and the elements opposing its action are *demoralised*. Now, to any one

who has thought out and connected the various evolution-theories, as taken, not from any occult source, but from the ordinary scientific manuals accessible to all—from the hypothesis of the latest variation in the habits of species—say the acquisition of carnivorous habits by the New Zealand parrot, for instance—to the farthest glimpses backwards into Space and Eternity afforded by the "*Fire-Mist*" doctrine, it will be apparent that they all rest on one basis. That basis is, that the impulse once given to a hypothetical Unit has a tendency to continue itself; and consequently, that anything "done" by something at a certain time and certain place tends to be renewed at analogous other times and places.

Such is the admitted *rationale* of heredity and atavism. That the same things apply to our ordinary conduct is apparent from the notorious ease with which "habits,"—bad or good, as the case may be—are acquired, and it will not be questioned that this applies, as a rule, as much to the moral and intellectual as to the physical world.

Furthermore, History and Science teach us plainly that certain physical habits conduce to certain moral and intellectual results. There never yet was a conquering nation of vegetarians. Even in the old Aryan times, we do not learn that the very Rishees, from whose lore and practice we gain the knowledge of Occultism, ever interdicted the *Kshatryas* (military caste) from hunting or a carnivorous diet. Filling, as they did, a certain place in the body politic in the actual condition of the world, the Rishees would have as little thought of preventing them, as of restraining the tigers of the jungle from their habits. That did not affect what the Rishees themselves did.

The aspirant to longevity then must be on his guard against *two dangers*. He must beware especially of impure and animal* thoughts. For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*,† however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles and are still subject to the law that an "action" has a tendency to repeat itself; a tend-

* In other words, the thought tends to provoke the deed.—G. M.

† We use the word in the plural, reminding the reader that, according to our doctrine, man is septenary.—G. M.

ency to set up analogous action in the grosser "shell" they are in contact with, and concealed within.

And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions unfavourable to pure thoughts, hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

To return to the practical process. A normally healthy mind, in a normally healthy body, is a good starting-point. Though exceptionally powerful and self-devoted natures may sometimes recover the ground, lost by mental degradation or physical misuse, by employing proper means, under the direction of unswerving resolution, yet often things may have gone so far that there is no longer stamina enough to sustain the conflict sufficiently long to perpetuate this life; though what in Eastern parlance is called the "merit" of the effort will help to ameliorate conditions and improve matters in another.

However this may be, the prescribed course of self-discipline commences here. It may be stated briefly that its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines—one being useless without the other. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that all sense of restraint—even if self-imposed—is useless. Not only is all "goodness" that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of a physical or so-called "spiritual" nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral atmosphere of the world, but the desire to be "good" or "pure" to be efficacious, must be spontaneous. It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law: not a chastity enforced by the dread of Public Opinion; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical Future Life.*

It will be seen now in connection with the doctrine of the tendency to the renewal of action before discussed, that the course of self-discipline recommended as the only road to Longevity by Occultism is *not* a "visionary" theory

* Col. Olcott clearly and succinctly explains the Buddhistic doctrine of Merit or *Karma*, in his *Buddhist Catechism* (Question 83).—G. M.

dealing with vague "ideas," but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each particle of the several men composing the septenary individual recieves an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own free-will and with "pleasure." Every one must be practised and perfect in a thing to do it with pleasure. This rule especially applies to the case of the development of Man. "Virtue" may be very good in its way—it may lead to the grandest results. But to become efficacious it has to be practised cheerfully not with reluctance or pain. As a consequence of the above consideration the candidate for Longevity at the commeneement of his career must begin to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following good reason. As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory, his visible material frame is always renewing its particles; he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain *period* during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. And while this is the *particular* result as regards certain "vices," the general result of an abstention from "gross" acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of Atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the "relative" density and coherence of the outer shell (as a result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be "made up" (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

What physical desires are to be abandoned and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for while it supplies no nourishment, nor even any direct pleasure (beyond such sweetness or fragrance as may be gained in the taste of wine, &c., to which alcohol, in itself, is non-essential) to even the grossest elements of even the "physical" frame, it induces a violence of action a rush so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross, and dense elements, and which, by the action of the well-known law of Re-action (say, in commercial phrase, "supply and demand") tends

to summon them from the surrounding universe, and therefore directly counteracts the object we have in view.

Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason, in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not for a would-be sage who has to exist and......

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, &c.,) are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as "vicious," but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as "innocent," have yet the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the body—the most harmless to others and the least "gross" being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case)—must be carried on the moral purification.

Nor must it be imagined that "austerities" as commonly understood can, in the majority of cases, avail much to hasten the "etherealising process. That is the rock on which many of the Eastern esoteric sects have foundered, and the reason why they have degenerated into degrading superstitions. The Western monks and the Eastern Yogees, who think they will reach the apex of powers by concentrating their thought on their navel, or by standing on one leg, are practising exercises which serve no other purpose than to strengthen the will-power, which is sometimes applied to the basest purposes. These are examples of this one-sided and dwarf development. It is no use to fast *as long as you require food.* The ceasing of desire for food without impairment of health is the sign which indicates that it should be taken in lesser and ever decreasing quantities until the extreme limit compatible with life is reached. A stage will be finally attained where only water will be required.

Nor is it of any use for this particular purpose of longevity to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so on with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the

essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

So it must be with the moral purification of the heart. The " basest " inclinations must go first—then the others. First avarice, then fear, then envy, worldly pride, uncharitableness, hatred; last of all ambition and curiosity must be abandoned successively. The strengthening of the more ethereal and so-called "spiritual" parts of the man must go on at the same time. Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged. Meditation is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to " go out towards the infinite, " which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration, but which has now no synonym in the European languages, because the thing no longer exists in the West, and its name has been vulgarised to the make-believe shams known as prayer, glorification, and repentance. Through all stages of training the equilibrium of the consciousness —the assurance that all *must* be right in the Kosmos, and therefore, with *you* a portion of it—must be retained. The process of life must not be hurried but retarded, if possible; to do otherwise may do good to others—perhaps even to yourself in other spheres, but it will hasten your dissolution in this.

Nor must the externals be neglected in this first stage. Remember that an adept, though "existing" so as to convey to ordinary minds the idea of his being immortal, is not also invulnerable to agencies from without. The training to prolong life does not, in itself, secure one from accidents. As far as any physical preparation goes, the sword may still cut, the disease enter, the poison disarrange. This case is very clearly and beautifully put in *Zanoni*; and it is correctly put and must be so, unless all "adeptism" is a baseless lie. The adept may be more secure from ordinary dangers than the common mortal, but he is so by virtue of the superior knowledge, calmness, coolness and penetration which his lengthened existence and its necessary concomitants have enabled him to acquire; not by virtue of any preservative power in the process itself. He is secure as a man armed with a rifle is; more secure than a naked baboon; not secure in the sense in which the deva (god) was supposed to be securer than a man.

If this is so in the case of the high adept, how much more necessary is it that the neophyte should be not only

protected but that he himself should use all possible means to ensure for himself the necessary duration of life to complete the process of mastering the phenomena we call death! It may be said, why do not the higher adepts protect him? Perhaps they *do* to some extent, but the child must learn to walk alone; to make him independent of his own efforts in respect to safety, would be destroying one element necessary to his development—the sense of responsibility. What courage or conduct would be called for in a man sent to fight when armed with irresistible weapons and clothed in impenetrable armour? Hence the neophyte should endeavour, as far as possible, to fulfil every true canon of sanitary law as laid down by modern scientists. Pure air, pure water, pure food, gentle exercise, regular hours, pleasant occupations and surroundings, are all if not indispensable at least serviceable to his progress. It is to secure these, at least as much as silence and solitude, that the Gods, Sages, Occultists of all ages have retired as much as possible to the quiet of the country, the cool cave, the depths of the forest, the expanse of the desert, or the heights of the mountains. Is it not suggestive that the Gods have always loved the "high places"; and that in the present day the highest section of Occult Brotherhood on earth inhabit the highest mountain plateaux on the earth?*

Nor must the beginner disdain the assistance of medicine and good medical regimen. He is still an ordinary mortal, and he requires the aid of an ordinary mortal.

"Suppose, however, all the conditions required, or which the reader will understand as required (for the details and varieties of treatment requisite, are too numerous to be detailed here) are fulfilled, what is the next step?" the reader will ask. Well if there have been no back-slidings or remissness in the procedure indicated, the following physical results will follow:—

First the Neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations

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* The stern prohibition to the Jews to serve "their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills" is *traced* back to the unwillingness of their ancient elders to allow people in most cases unfit for adeptship to choose a life of celibacy and asceticism, or in other words, to pursue adeptship. This prohibition had an esoteric meaning before it became the prohibition, incomprehensible in its dead-letter sense: for it is not India alone whose sons accorded divine honours to the WISE ONES, but all nations regarded their adepts and initiates in a supernal light.—G. M.

will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of nature—the sort of feeling one can remember to have experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. "Action and Re-action are equal."

Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually—no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually be the best. Then as till now, you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually—very gradually—as you feel capable of it; diminish the quantity. You will ask : "Can a man exist without food ?" No, but before you mock, consider the character of the process alluded to. It is a notorious fact that many of the lowest and simplest organisms have no excretions. The common guinea-worm is a very good instance. It has rather a complicated organism, but it has no ejaculatory duct. All it consumes—the poorest essences of the human body—is applied to its growth and propagation. Living as it does in human tissue, it passes no digested food away. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in a somewhat analogous condition, with this difference or differences, that he *does* excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin, and by those too enter other etherealised particles of matter to contribute towards his support.* Otherwise, all the food and drink is sufficient only to keep in equilibrium those "gross" parts of his physical body which still remain to repair their cuticle-waste through the medium of the blood. Later on, the process of cell-development in his frame will undergo a change; a change for the better, the opposite of that in disease for the worse—he will become *all* living and sensitive, and will derive nourishment from the Ether (Akas). But that epoch for our neophyte is yet far distant.

Probably, long before that period has arrived, other results, no less surprising than incredible to the uninitiated will have ensued to give our neophyte courage and

* He is in a state similar to the physical state of a fœtus before birth into the world.—G. M.

consolation in his difficult task. It would be but a truism to repeat what has been again alleged (in ignorance of its real *rationale*) by hundreds and hundreds of writers as to the happiness and content conferred by a life of innocence and purity. But often at the very commencement of the process some real physical result, unexpected and unthought of by the neophyte, occurs. Some lingering disease, hitherto deemed hopeless, may take a favourable turn; or he may develop healing mesmeric powers himself; or some hitherto unknown sharpening of his senses may delight him. The *rationale* of these things is, as we have said, neither miraculous nor difficult of comprehension. In the first place, the sudden change in the direction of the vital energy (which, whatever view we take of it and its origin, is acknowledged by all schools of philosophy as most recondite, and as the motive power) must produce results of some kind. In the second, Theosophy shows, as we said before, that a man consists of several men pervading each other, and on this view (although it is very difficult to express the idea in language) it is but natural that the progressive etherealisation of the densest and most gross of all should leave the others literally more at liberty. A troop of horses may be blocked by a mob and have much difficulty in fighting its way through; but if every one of the mob could be changed suddenly into a ghost, there would be little to retard it. And as each interior entity is more rare, active, and volatile than the outer, and as each has relation with certain different elements, spaces, and properties of the kosmos which are treated of in other articles on Occultism, the mind of the reader may conceive—though the pen of the writer could not express it in a dozen volumes—the magnificent possibilities gradually unfolded to the neophyte.

Many of the opportunities thus suggested may be taken advantage of by the neophyte for his own safety, amusement, and the good of those around him; *but the way in which* he does this is one adapted to his fitness—a part of the ordeal he has to pass through, and misuse of these powers will certainly entail the loss of them as a natural result. The *Itchcha* (or desire) evoked anew by the vistas they open up will retard or throw back his progress.

But there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and *which is now*, for the first, in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is now come.

The educated reader need not be reminded again that one of the great discoveries which have immortalised the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always a tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is, that, in general, organised beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the *actual* ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the Race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is still known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, *and would obey it.* It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by *any procedure* this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "Death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias—there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable Will to direct and wield the whole.*

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* In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially *physiology*, have to say as to the power of human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer-lived. One does not need to practise medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favourable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone."—*Dr. George M. Beard.*

From that time forward, the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered "The dweller of the Threshold"—the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onwards to perfection.

For, it must be remembered, that nature everywhere acts by Law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body, also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the Scientist by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasing wider range of relations with the surrounding kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the INFINITE TOTALITY.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that "Adepts" are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for, *pari passu*, with the etherealisation of their bodies and the development of their power, grows an, increasing distaste, and a so-to-speak, "contempt" for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding "Death" abandons all on which the latter can take hold. In the progress to Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the adept does not become "immortal" as the word is ordinarily understood. By or about the time when the Death-limit of his race is passed, HE IS ACTUALLY DEAD, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, that he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of the world; he is oblivious of its pleasures; careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of DUTY never leaves him blind to its very existence. For the new ethereal senses opening

to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation of ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and new hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist—both liberally and metaphorically—is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually "gone to join the gods."

And from this account too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophist to "procure for them communication with the highest Adepts." It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say: "This is not *god-like.* This is the acme of selfishness"...... But let him realise that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to once more submit to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written, will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining *practically* "higher powers." Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the PATH.........Can they tread it?

Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are unexpected dangers, temptations and enemies also beset the way of the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and *has* never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine in one case, the moon to be within his reach, and, in the other, grasp a live coal with the most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense this abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of material pleasure, to be gained at once by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case many would be prepared willingly to die *now* for the sake of the paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of

pleasure, wisdom and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in unimaginable succession up the long vista which leads to Nirvana. And this too, qualified by the necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is two-fold : (1st) the consciousness of Power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures, and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise ; and (2ndly) as has been already said—This is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that "Death" can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the adept has safely crossed the turning point. Physical and metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the Part become acquainted with the Whole, and that that which is *now something* can only feel, know, and enjoy Everything when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that *Unalterable Circle* wherein Our Knowledge becomes Ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the Nothing.